[*English*]

Reduction in prices of Petrol and Petroleum Products

*110. SHRI KARIA MUNDA:
SHRI BALRAJ PASSI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS to be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to reduce the prices of diesel, petrol and petroleum products raised during the Gulf war; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) does not arise.

[*Translation*]

Central Funds for control of Water Logging in Bihar

*111. SHRI SHHEDI PASWAN:
SHRI RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES to be pleased to state:

(a) the funds sanctioned by the Union Government for control of water-logging in Bihar, through the special Task Force, during the last two years;

(b) whether the full amount has been released;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the amount actually released for that purpose; and

(d) whether the Government propose to increase the amount of Central grants and loans in view of the severity of water-logging in the State?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) to (c). No separate funds the schemes to control water logging in Bihar as identified by the Task Force, have been sanctioned by the Union Government. The work is to be carried out by the State from their Plan funds. Assistance is given to the States as block grants and is not tied to any specific sector including flood sector.

(d) No, Sir.

[*English*]

Enhancement in Visa Fee

*112. SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHVAN:
SHRI BHUVNESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to enhance the visa fee recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether this will affect our tourism industry adversely;

(d) whether the Government propose to reconsider its decision particularly in regard to tourists;

(e) whether any representation has been received by the Indian Embassies in Singapore and Malaysia on this issue; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Visa fee which prior to November 91 was different for different nationalities and differed for single/double/triple/multiple entries has been now rationalised. It now

depends upon duration of its validity. Reasons for increase in visa fee are:

(i) In 1990 the visa regime was liberalised and the duration of visa was extended upto 5 years but the visa fee was not appropriately increased.

(ii) The recent devaluation of Indian rupee made it imperative to revise the visa fee upwards.

(iii) Indian visa fee was reduced unnaturally in favour of nationals of UK, USA, FRG, France, Spain, Italy and Netherlands. But these countries did not reciprocate to our action.

(iv) Increasing local cost of running consular and visa services at Mission Post abroad.

(v) Mobilising funds for proper staffing and modernisation of Consular Section in our Mission abroad, for further improving the quality of services.

(c) Visa fee is a very small fraction of total expenses incurred by a tourist. The upward revision of visa fee therefore, may not materially affect the tourism industry adversely. Tourists are not attracted so much by low visa fee as by internal peace and tranquillity, tourist value of a country, tourist infrastructure, expeditious special services to tourists etc.

(d) Government policies are reviewed from time to time.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. A few representations have been received by Indian Embassies in Singapore and Malaysia. Details are awaited.

Funds for Command area development Programme in Maharashtra

*113. SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether funds have been obtained from the European Economic Community or other international institutions for the implementation of the Command Area Development Programme in the Konkon region of Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure proper utilisation of such funds?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An Agreement was signed in October 1988 with European Economic Community for assistance of 15 million ECU (Rupees Twenty two crores) for development of water control system for diversification of crops in Konkan region of Maharashtra.

(c) Government of Maharashtra has been advised to provide additional staff and additional funds, and to prepare additional new schemes according to a specified time schedule.

Foreign Collaboration for Exploitation of Natural Gas

*114. SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA:
DR. A.K. PATEL:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for collaboration of Oil and Natural Gas Commission/Gas Authority of India with France for providing technology for exploitation of natural gas available in South India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the proposal is